

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

USDEL JEC PARIS

USSAGE NAKHON PHANOM

CINCPAC HONOLULU

COGARD

TREASURY

XMT AMEMBASSY SUVA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

UNCLAS STATE 201106

COGARD FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XC, US

SUBJECT: SEPTEMBER 12 EA PRESS SUMMARY

M

1. INDOCHINA

PL TELLS NEUTRAL DIPLOMATS IT WILL FREE EMMET KAY AS

UNCLASSIFIED

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PART OF GENERAL POW EXCHANGE NEXT THURSDAY. ONE
SOURCE SAYS THAT HIS NAME WILL "DEFINITELY BE THERE"
WHEN TWO SIDES EXCHANGE PRISONER LISTS ON TUESDAY
(AP, WP).

"BIG" MINH CALLS FOR NATIONWIDE MOVEMENT FOR RECONCILIATION TO RESTORE PEACE TO SVN (WP 9/11). IN FIRST OFFICIAL COMMENT ON REPORTED THIEU ATTEMPT TO OPEN NEW PEACE TALKS WITH NVN AND VC, RADIO HANOI BROADCAST RIDICULED PEACE OFFER AND SAID THIEU WAS CONVERTED FROM HAWK TO DOVE BY NIXON'S DOWNFALL. BUT BROADCAST DID NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY OF SECRET TALKS BETWEEN SVN AND COMMUNISTS (WP).

FOLLOWING GVN PUT-DOWN OF ANTI-CORRUPTION DEMONSTRATION IN HUE ON SUNDAY, GROUP OF PRIESTS AND ABOUT 200 STUDENTS MET IN HUE CATHEDRAL ON MONDAY WITHOUT POLICE INTERFERENCE AND PLEDGED "STRUGGLE TO THE END" AGAINST CORRUPTION (AP, LAT 9/11). ARBUCKLE (S-N 9/11) SAYS SVN'S RCS' DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE ANTI-

CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN IN STREETS AND OTHER POLITICAL FORUMS SEEN BY DIPLOMATS AS THIRD MAJOR INTERNAL PROBLEM FOR GVN, IN ADDITION TO MIL AND ECON PROBLEMS. RCS PLEDGE MORE DEMONSTRATIONS IN CITIES WITH DA NANG NEXT, AND EVENTUALLY SAIGON. CONSERVATIVE ANTI-COMMUNIST FLAREUP SEEN BY DIPLOMATS AS POTENTIALLY MORE IMPORTANT THAN SPORADIC ACTIVITY BY BUDDHISTS, SINCE CATHOLICS HAVE BEEN STANDEST GVN SUPPORTERS. DIPLOMATS AND VIET POLITICIANS BELIEVE FUTURE EVOLUTION OF PROTEST DEPENDS ON THIEU'S REACTION; HARSH REPRESSION WOULD ONLY LEAD TO MORE VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS, WHILE COMPLETE GIVING-WAY BY THIEU COULD SPARK NEW POLITICAL DEMANDS. THIRD POSSIBILITY, WHICH THIEU SEEMS TO BE PURSUING, WOULD BE MODERATE REACTION TO HINDER DEMONSTRATIONS WITH LESS THAN TOUGH POLICE ACTION WHILE GAINING TIME IN WHICH TO DIVIDE CATHOLICS.

ARBUCKLE SEES RCS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT WORSENING MIL AND ECON SITUATION; ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVE BELIEVED TO BE PART OF DESIRE BY RC LEADERS TO DISSOCIATE UNCLASSIFIED

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SELVES FROM GVN AND FORCE REFORMS TO ENSURE WIDER POLITICAL SUPPORT BASE AGAINST COMMUNISTS. THIEU STILL RETAINS CATHOLIC SUPPORT BECAUSE OF ANTI-COMMUNISM AND WILLINGNESS TO SAFEGUARD CATHOLIC INTERESTS AND SOURCES BELIEVE THIEU MAY BE GIVING IN TO DEMANDS BY FIRING TWO GENERALS FOR ALLEGEDLY POCKETING PAY FOR NON-EXISTENT TROOPS. REPORTS OF DRAWING TOGETHER OF BUDDHISTS AND RCS IN ANTI-GVN STANCE LENDS ADDED IMPORT TO SITUATION. ARBUCKLE REVIEWS BUDDHIST RIOTS IN 63-67, ATTRIBUTES FAILURE IN ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES TO RC BACKING OF GOVT. BUDDHIST LEADERS HAVE BEEN MEETING RECENTLY IN HUE, SET UP "NATIONAL RECONCILIATION FORCE" CALLING FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF

C-F POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS. THIS IS IN DIRECT CONTRAST WITH RC ANTI-COMMUNIST INTERESTS, BUT CATHOLICS AND BUDDHISTS HAVE FOUND COMMON GROUND IN UNHAPPINESS WITH MIL AND ECON SITUATION. STATES THAT FOR FIRST TIME THIEU FACES POTENTIAL SIMULTANEOUS ACTION BY RCS AND BUDDHISTS.

SAIGON COMMAND SAYS COMMUNIST FROGMEN BLEW UP HIGHWAY 1 BRIDGE TO CUT HUE OFF FROM DA NANG, ITS CHIEF SOURCE OF SUPPLIES (UPI, S-N 9/11). MIL SOURCES SAY GEN. LOAN, FORMER HEAD ON NATIONAL POLICE, RETIRED AFTER AMPUTATION OF RIGHT LEG. LOAN, CONDEMNED AROUND WORLD FOR SHOOTING VC PRISONER IN HEAD DURING TET OFFENSIVE, WAS LATER BADLY WOUNDED IN LEG (AP, LAT 9/11).

NYT'S MARKHAM QUOTES COMPETENT WESTERN OBSERVERS THAT RECENT STEPPED-UP COMMUNIST GROUND ATTACKS DO NOT SEEM TO PORTEND MAJOR OFFENSIVE, THOUGH "SIGNALS ARE MIXED." SOME DIA ANALYSTS ARGUE THAT NVN INTENDS MAJOR PUSH THAT WOULD SCRAP C-F, BUT ANOTHER WESTERN SPECIALIST THINKS OFFENSIVE UNLIKELY BECAUSE WHAT COMMUNISTS HAVE BEEN DOING IS "PRETTY SUCCESSFUL." DIPLOMAT SAYS COMMUNISTS SEE ECON DETERIORATION AND BEGINNINGS OF POLITICAL UNREST IN FORM OF ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN LED BY RCS. MOREOVER, SVN FORCES CAN NO LONGER CONCENTRATE "WITHERING FIRE POWER" IN BATTLE BECAUSE OF CONGRESSIONAL CUTS IN MIL AID. ADDS THAT IF ECONOMY BEGINS TO UNRAVEL DRAMATICALLY, COMMUNISTS UNCLASSIFIED

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MAY ACCELERATE ATTACKS NEXT SPRING TO TOPPLE THIEU.

MARKHAM NOTES MAJOR SPEECH SEPT 1 BY PHAM VAN DONG THAT HARPED ON RECONSTRUCTION IN NORTH AND USED "ESSENTIALLY DEFENSIVE TERMINOLOGY" WHEN DISCUSSING "LIBERATION" OF SOUTH. NOTES THAT SOME ANALYSTS FOUND INDICATIONS OF DISCORD IN SPEECH OVER STRATEGY IN SOUTH OR DETAILS OF NORTH'S ECON POLICIES. ABSENCE OF REFERENCES TO FIVE-YEAR PLAN TO START IN 1976 AND OF HINTS ABOUT PARTY CONGRESS, EXPECTED NEXT YEAR, ALSO NOTED. FOREIGN ANALYSTS BELIEVE BOTH OF THESE WILL MORE SHARPLY DEFINE NVN LONG-RANGE POLICY TOWARD SOUTH, AND MAJOR RESOURCE COMMITMENT TO FIVE-YEAR PLAN COULD RESTRICT SCOPE OF OPTIONS. RECENT INTERNAL COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA EMPHASIZES OVERTHROW OF THIEU AND REPLACEMENT WITH GOVT THAT WOULD IMPLEMENT C-F. THIS POLITICAL LINE IS ONE OF "MIXED SIGNALS" THAT SOME ANALYSTS CITE IN ARGUING THAT MAJOR DRIVE IS IMMINENT. ANOTHER IS PATTERN OF MAJOR ATTACKS IN NORTHERN SVN. BUT MANY OBSERVERS SEE THEM AS TACTICAL MOVES TO PUT GVN ON DEFENSIVE, RETAKE LOST TERRITORY AND DISRUPT REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMS.

IN PP LONG BORET SAYS SAUDI ARABIA, LEBANON AND JORDAN AGREE TO EXCHANGE AMBASSADORS WITH GKR FOR FIRST TIME, REFUSES TO COMMENT ON OIL DISPUTE BETWEEN HIS GOVT AND GVN. EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS IS SIGNIFICANT IN GAINING INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION BECAUSE UNGA WILL DEBATE PROPOSAL TO OUST GKR AND RECOGNIZE GRUNK (UPI, WP).

2. KOREA

PRES. FORD LIKELY TO VISIT ROK THIS FALL, FOLLOWING TRIP TO JAPAN (S-N, NYPOST 9/11).

CHITRIB CARRIES HALF PAGE UPI TELEPHOTO OF KOREAN POLICE FIRING TEAR GAS ON DEMONSTRATORS AT JAPANESE EMBASSY.

ABOUT 500 WAR VETERANS STORMED SEOUL BRANCH OF TOKYO UNCLASSIFIED

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BANK, SMASHING SIGNBOARD AND NINE WINDOWS IN ANTI-JAPANESE PROTEST. EARLIER POLICE SAID THEY SEIZED TWO MEN INTENDING TO BLOW UP JAPANESE EMBASSY. US CHARGE D' AFFAIRES ERICSON MET TWICE WITH FM KIN DONG-JO AMID REPORTS US URGING THE TWO NATIONS TO SETTLE DISPUTE QUICKLY (AP, NYT, NYPOST 9/11).

US AND ROK SIGNED 17.2 MILLION DOL LOAN AGREEMENT TO HELP KOREA BUILD IRRIGATION PROJECT TO BOOST RICE AND BARLEY PRODUCTION (UPI NYT, JOC; AP WP, PHINQ).

3. JAPAN

GOJ ANNOUNCED APPOINTMENT OF SHIINA AS SPECIAL ENVOY TO ROK TO STRAIGHTEN OUT DISPUTE. SHIINA PLAYED LEADING ROLE IN WORKING OUT 1965 TREATY ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND IS REGARDED AS ONE OF MOST SYMPATHETIC TO KOREA AMONG JAPAN'S PROMINENT POLITICIANS (AP, NYT).

ECONOMIC PLANNING AGENCY SAYS JAPAN VIRTUALLY CERTAIN NOT TO REACH ORIGINAL GROWTH TARGET OF 2.5 PERCENT FOR CURRENT FISCAL YEAR AND MAY EVEN RECORD NEGATIVE GROWTH RATE. BUT FACT THAT INFLATION STILL NOT UNDER CONTROL VIEWED AS MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM (JOC).

4.

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